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DE RUEHWN #2237 3561921
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 221921Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3952
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1595
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 002237

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2016

TAGS: ENRG EPET EINV PGOV PREL VE DO XL

SUBJECT: PETROCARIBE UPDATE #29: A COMEDY OF ERRORS IN
DOMINICA

REF: BRIDGETOWN 1931

Classified By: DCM Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a recent conversation with PolOff, Dr. Joseph Bannis, Permanent Secretary for Public Works and Public Utilities, grinned as he shared how humorous he found the myriad of logistical struggles surrounding Petrocaribe. According to Bannis, Petrocaribe is proving to be only a political program and no one under Chavez has efficient control over the logistics of delivering on Petrocaribe. As examples, Bannis cited two previous fumbles as Venezuela attempted fuel deliveries to Dominica. In one incident, the captain of a ship delivering fuel was unhappy with the proposed docking site so headed down the coast. Shortly after, he was unhappy with the second site so simply returned home. In the second example, the captain began a fuel delivery, pumped less than half of the expected delivery and then said he was out of time, cut the pump, and left. Bannis marveled at the lack of planning in both cases, of which he asked, "Who's calling the shots?"

¶2. (C) PolOff followed up on the "mid-November shipment" that both the Minister of Public Works and Public Utilities Ambrose George and acting Permanent Secretary of Housing, Lands, Telecommunications, Energy, and Ports Lucien Blackmoore attested to in previous meetings (reftel). Bannis smirked and stated that it did not arrive, that no oil would be delivered this year, and quite possibly not next year either. Bannis countered Blackmoore by saying that any oil delivery is unlikely until the Mahaut storage facilities are complete. Furthermore, he said that the storage tanks components have been cut for some time, and the pieces are just laying around waiting to be welded together.

¶3. (C) BIONOTE: Bannis is an engineer by trade with extensive government service working directly for former prime minister Dame Eugenia Charles and as permanent secretary for both Public Works and for the Ministry of Health. He received an undergraduate degree in Trinidad and then a master's degree from Cambridge in England. Bannis took a two-year break (1988-90) from his work for Dame Eugenia to earn a doctorate in engineering management at the University of Missouri. Shortly after returning to Dominica, Bannis was politically "knocked down" and "bruised" when Edison James took power. Following this setback, Bannis became jaded with politics, but still enjoys his work in the civil service. A technocrat rather than a bureaucrat, Bannis is more interested in the efficiency and practicality of government projects than the political maneuverings.

